United Nations A/63/PV.2

General Assembly

Sixty-third session

Official Records

2nd plenary meeting
Friday, 19 September 2008, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. D'Escoto Brockmann ..... (Nicaragua)

The meeting was called to order at 10.20 a.m.

Item 7 of the provisional agenda (*continued*)

Organization of work, adoption of the agenda and allocation of items

First report of the General Committee (A/63/250)

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): May I invite the General Assembly to direct its attention to section I of the report of the General Committee. In that section, the Committee took note of the information contained in paragraph 2.

May I request the General Assembly now to direct its attention to section II, entitled "Organization of the session", which contains a number of recommendations concerning the General Committee, rationalization of work, the opening and closing dates for the session, the schedule of meetings, the general debate, the conduct of meetings, et cetera. In paragraph 16, the General Committee recommends that the general debate be held from Tuesday, 23 September to Saturday 27 September and on Monday, 29 September 2008.

In connection with the recommendations of the General Committee on the general debate, I would like to give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Shaaban (Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management): I wish to inform members that, in connection with the recommendation of the General Committee that the General Assembly hold the general debate on Saturday, 27 September 2008, I should like to put on record the following statement of financial implications on behalf of the Secretary-General, in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly.

The holding of the general debate of the General Assembly on Saturday 27 September 2008 had not been planned, though regular meetings servicing requirements for the general debate during weekdays have been provided for within the official calendar of conferences. Therefore, meeting on a Saturday implies overtime compensation for meetings servicing and other related staff. Accordingly, resources related to overtime for meeting servicing staff would be required.

In addition, other related staff from the Office of the Central Support Services, the Department of Safety and Security and the Department of Public Information would be required to provide sound engineering, safety and security, press coverage, webcasting, and radio and television services, broken down as follows: section 2 — General Assembly affairs and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management: $58,400; section 27 — Public information: $25,100; section 28 D — Office of Central Support Services: $5,000; and section 33 — Safety and security: $10,000; for a total of $98,500.

No provisions have been made under the programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009 for servicing the general debate of the General Assembly on a Saturday. Should the plan to hold the general debate of the General Assembly on Saturday,

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27 September 2008 be adopted, indicative additional conference servicing and other requirements of $98,500 would arise. All efforts will be made to meet the requirements within the provisions under section 2, General Assembly and Economic and Social Council affairs and conference management; section 27, Public information; section 28 D, Office of Central Support Services; and section 33, Safety and security, of the programme budget for the biennium 2008-2009.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Shinyo (Japan): Japan has no problem with having a general debate on a Saturday. However, we have difficulty accepting the financial implications just mentioned by the representative of the Secretariat. It is our understanding that, if the debate were to take place on Saturday, the cost would be absorbed by currently existing financial resources. Therefore, we cannot join the consensus of having the general debate on Saturday without clearance of the budgetary implications.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of the Secretariat.

Mr. Shaaban (Under-Secretary-General for General Assembly and Conference Management): The statement read out on behalf of the Secretary-General, as I explained, was in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly. According to that rule, I am required to brief the General Assembly on the figures I indicated for a total of $98,500. At the same time, on behalf of the Secretary-General, I said that all efforts will be made to meet the requirements within the provisions of the available budget under the relevant sections. Thus, my statement did not mean that those would be extra expenses.

The President: I give the floor to the representative of Japan.

Mr. Shinyo (Japan): I am sorry to take the floor again. I thank the representative of the Secretariat for the clarification. In the understanding that there will be no further budgetary implications, we can join the consensus on holding the general debate on Saturday, 27 September.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I thank the representative of the Secretariat. May I take it that the Assembly approves the recommendation of the General Committee that the general debate be held from Tuesday, 23 September to Saturday, 27 Septem 2008 and on Monday, 29 September 2008?

It is so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): All o recommendations in section II of the memorandun the Secretary-General concern established practice rather than going through them one by one, I believ would be better and much more efficient that address all organizational matters concerning General Assembly as a whole. If there are comments on that approach, we shall proc accordingly.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Gen Assembly to take note of all of the information th is requested to take note of and to approve all recommendations of the General Committee contai in section II of the report?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Having adopted the recommendation in paragraph 15 waiving the requirements of rule 67 of the rule procedure of the General Assembly to declar meeting open, I would like to endorse the pract suggestion that has been made at previous sessi that each delegation designate someone to be prese the meeting rooms at the scheduled time.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Gen Assembly to take note of the information containe paragraph 36, concerning the timely submission draft proposals for the review of their progran budget implications?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): I now in Members to turn their attention to section III dea with the adoption of the agenda. The question allocation of items will be dealt with subsequentl section IV.

In section III, the General Committee took of the information contained in paragraphs 44 to 49

In paragraph 50, the General Assembly informed that the General Committee decided postpone to a later date its consideration of question of the inclusion of item 19 of the agenda, "Question of the Comorian island of Mayot

With respect to paragraph 51, the General Committee recommended not to include item 28 of the draft agenda, "Declaration of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity on the aerial and naval military attack against the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya by the present United States Administration in April 1986". May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In paragraph 52, the General Committee recommends that the consideration of item 40 of the draft agenda, "Question of the Malagasy islands of Glorieuses, Juan de Nova, Europa and Bassas da India", be deferred to the sixty-fourth session and that the item be included in the provisional agenda of that session. May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In paragraph 53, in connection with sub-item (e) of item 58 of the draft agenda, "Social development: Review and appraisal of the World Programme of Action concerning disabled persons", the General Committee recommends that sub-item (e) of item 58 be included in the agenda of the current session under heading B, "Promotion of sustained economic growth and sustainable development in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and recent United Nations conferences". May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In paragraph 54, in connection with sub-item (k) of item 107 of the draft agenda, "Appointment of the judges of the United Nations Dispute Tribunal", the General Committee recommends that sub-item (k) of item 107 be included in the agenda of the current session under heading I, "Organizational, administrative and other matters". May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In paragraph 55, in connection with sub-item (l) of item 107 of the draft agenda, "Appointment of the judges of the United Nations Appeals Tribunal", the General Committee recommends that sub-item (l) of item 107 be included in the agenda of the current session under heading I, "Organizational, administrative and other matters". May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In paragraph 56, in connection with item 153 of the draft agenda, "Observer status for the South Centre in the General Assembly", the General Committee recommends that item 153 be included in the agenda of the current session under heading I, "Organizational, administrative and other matters". May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In paragraph 57, in connection with item 154 of the draft agenda, "Observer status for the Agency for International Trade Information and Cooperation in the General Assembly", the General Committee recommends that item 154 be included in the agenda of the current session under heading I, "Organizational, administrative and other matters". May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In paragraph 58, the General Assembly is informed that the General Committee decided to postpone to a later date its consideration of the question of the inclusion of item 155 of the draft agenda, "Natural resources and conflicts".

In paragraph 59, the General Assembly is also informed that the General Committee decided to postpone to a later date during this calendar year its consideration of the question of the inclusion of item 156 of the draft agenda, "Commemoration of the seventy-fifth anniversary of the Great Famine of 1932-1933 in Ukraine (Holodomor)".

With respect to paragraph 60, the General Committee recommended not to include item 157 of the draft agenda, "Need to examine the fundamental rights of the 23 million people of the Republic of China (Taiwan) to participate meaningfully in the activities of the United Nations specialized agencies". May I take it that the Assembly approves that recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In paragraph 61, the General Committee recommends that item 158 of the draft agenda, "Request for an advisory opinion of the International Court of Justice on whether the unilateral declaration of independence of Kosovo is in accordance with international law", be included in the agenda of the current session under heading F, "Promotion of justice and international law".

I call on the representative of the United States of America.

Ms. Willson (United States of America): The United States would like to underline its support for the International Court of Justice and emphasize that we recognize the importance that seeking an advisory opinion from the Court can have in appropriate cases.

The United States also maintains its general support for a policy of liberal inscription of items on the agenda of the General Assembly. In the light of that policy, we have chosen not to oppose the inscription of Serbia's request for the General Assembly to consider the question of referring Kosovo's independence to the International Court of Justice.

Nevertheless, we have serious reservations about the appropriateness of the General Assembly considering that issue. We did not join the consensus in the General Committee, and for that reason, in joining consensus on the adoption of the other paragraphs of the General Committee's report, the United States will dissociate itself from the decisions relating to this item.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): May I take it that the General Assembly approves this recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): In paragraph 62, the General Assembly is informed that the General Committee decided to postpone to a later date its consideration of the question of the inclusion of item 159 of the draft agenda, "Observer status for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria in the General Assembly".

In paragraph 63, in connection with item 160 of the draft agenda, "Observer status for the University for Peace in the General Assembly", the General Committee recommends that item 160 be included in the agenda of the current session under heading I, "Organizational, administrative and other matter May I take it that the General Assembly approves t recommendation?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We turn n to the agenda which the General Committ recommends in paragraph 64 of its report for adopti by the General Assembly, taking into account t decisions just adopted with respect to the draft agend

Bearing in mind that the agenda is organiz under nine headings, we shall consider the inclusion items under each heading as a whole. I should like remind members once again that, at present, we are n discussing the substance of any item.

Items 1 to 3 have already been dealt with. W turn now to items 4 to 8. May I take it that these ite are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We turn n to the inclusion of the items listed under heading "Maintenance of international peace and security May I take it that the items listed under heading A a included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We come n to heading B, "Promotion of sustained econon growth and sustainable development in accordan with the relevant resolutions of the General Assemb and recent United Nations conferences". May I take that the items listed under this heading are included the agenda?

It is so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Next, we tu to heading C, "Development of Africa". May I take that the item listed under this heading is included in t agenda?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Now we co to heading D, "Promotion of human rights". May I ta it that the items listed under heading D are included the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Heading E entitled "Effective coordination of humanitari

assistance efforts". May I take it that the item listed under this heading is included in the agenda?

It is so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Next, we turn to heading F, "Promotion of justice and international law". May I take it that the items listed under heading F are included in the agenda?

It is so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Now we turn to heading G, "Disarmament". May I take it that the items listed under this heading are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Heading H is entitled "Drug control, crime prevention and combating international terrorism in all its forms and manifestations". May I take it that the items listed under this heading are included in the agenda?

It is so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Lastly, we turn to heading I, "Organizational, administrative and other matters". May I take it that the items listed under heading I are included in the agenda?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We turn now to section IV of the report of the General Committee, on allocation of items.

The General Committee took note of the information contained in paragraphs 65 to 68. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to take note of the information contained in paragraph 67, concerning the granting of observer status?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We shall now turn to the recommendations contained in paragraphs 69 to 75. We shall take up the recommendations one by one.

Before we proceed, may I remind members that the item numbers cited here refer to the agenda in paragraph 64 of the report before us, namely document A/63/250.

We turn first to paragraphs 69 (a) to (h), relating to a number of items to be considered in plenary meeting. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to take note of all of the information that the General Committee wishes it to take note of and to approve all the recommendations of the General Committee contained in paragraphs 69 (a) to (h)?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We now turn to paragraph 70 relating to item 89, "General and complete disarmament". May I take it that the General Assembly approves the recommendation contained in paragraph 70?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We turn now to paragraph 71, on item 48 of the Second Committee. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to take note of the information contained in paragraph 71?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We turn now to paragraphs 72 (a) and (b), on items 56 and 64 of the Third Committee, respectively. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to approve the recommendations and to take note of the information contained in paragraphs 72 (a) and (b)?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We turn now to paragraphs 73 (a) and (b), relating to items 119 and 129 of the Fifth Committee, respectively. May I take it that the General Assembly approves the recommendations contained in paragraphs 73 (a) and (b)?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We turn now to paragraphs 74 (a) to (c), on items 151, 152 and 153 of the Sixth Committee, respectively. May I take it that the General Assembly approves the recommendations contained in paragraphs 74 (a) to (c)?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We turn now to paragraph 75, relating to item 58, "Report of the Human Rights Council". The General Committee decided to defer consideration of the allocation of that item to a later date.

We shall now turn to paragraph 76 of the report of the General Committee, on the allocation of items to the plenary and to each Committee.

I turn first to the list of items recommended by the General Committee for consideration directly in plenary meeting under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of the items listed for plenary meeting?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We come next to the list of items that the General Committee has recommended for allocation to the First Committee under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of those items for consideration by the First Committee?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We turn now to the list of items that the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of those items for consideration by the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We come now to the list of items that the General Committee has recommended for allocation to the Second Committee under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I consider that the General Assembly approves the allocation of those items for consideration by the Second Committee?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): We turn now to the list of items that the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Third Committee under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of those items for consideration by the Third Committee?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Next, we come to the list of items that the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Fifth Committee under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of those items for consideration by the Fifth Committee?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): Lastly, we come to the list of items that the General Committee recommends for allocation to the Sixth Committee under all the relevant headings. Taking into account the decisions just adopted, may I take it that the General Assembly approves the allocation of those items for consideration by the Sixth Committee?

It was so decided.

The President (*spoke in Spanish*): The General Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of the first report of the General Committee. I wish to thank all the members of the Assembly for their cooperation.

Each Main Committee will receive the list of agenda items allocated to it so that it may begin its work in accordance with rule 99 of the rules of procedure.

I would now like to draw the attention of representatives to a matter concerning the participation of the Holy See, in its capacity as an Observer State, in the sessions and work of the General Assembly.

In accordance with General Assembly resolution 58/314 of 1 July 2004 and the note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/58/871, the Holy See, in its capacity as an Observer State, will participate in the work of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly, with no further need for a precursory explanation prior to any intervention.

I would also like to draw the attention of representatives to a matter concerning the participation of Palestine, in its capacity as observer, in the sessions and work of the General Assembly.

In accordance with General Assembly resolutions 3237 (XXIX) of 22 November 1974, 43/177 of 15 December 1988, and 52/250 of 7 July 1988, and the note by the Secretary-General contained in document A/52/1002, Palestine, in its capacity as observer, will participate in the work of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly, with no further need for a precursory explanation prior to any intervention.

The meeting rose at 11 a.m.